

Historic Virginia Documents on the Internet

Records illustrating the development of Virginia's political, social, and religious thought are of keen interest to researchers. Thanks to the efforts of various universities and organizations, many of these are now accessible on the Internet. The documents listed in this guide are identified by title and date, arranged by century, and placed in chronological order. Names of the institutions making the texts available are included.

PRE 18TH CENTURY DOCUMENTS

A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia, 1590

by Thomas Hariot

University of North Carolina

<<http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/hariot/hariot.html>>

The Virginia Charters

The royal charters by which the London Company of Virginia obtained permission from King James I to establish a Colony in Virginia

The First Charter of Virginia, 10 April 1606

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/va01.htm>>

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1601-1650/virginia/chart01.htm>>

The Second Charter of Virginia, 23 May 1609

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/va02.htm>>

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1601-1650/virginia/chart02.htm>>

The Third Charter of Virginia, 12 March 1611/12

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/va03.htm>>

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1601-1650/virginia/chart03.htm>>

Instructions for the Virginia Colony, 1606

Instructions from King James I to the Virginia Company on how to run the Virginia Colony which was "established by means of a joint-stock company" for the purpose of trade and profit.

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1601-1650/virginia/instru.htm>>

An Ordinance and Constitution of the Virginia Company in England, 24 July 1621

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1601-1650/virginia/ordi.htm>>

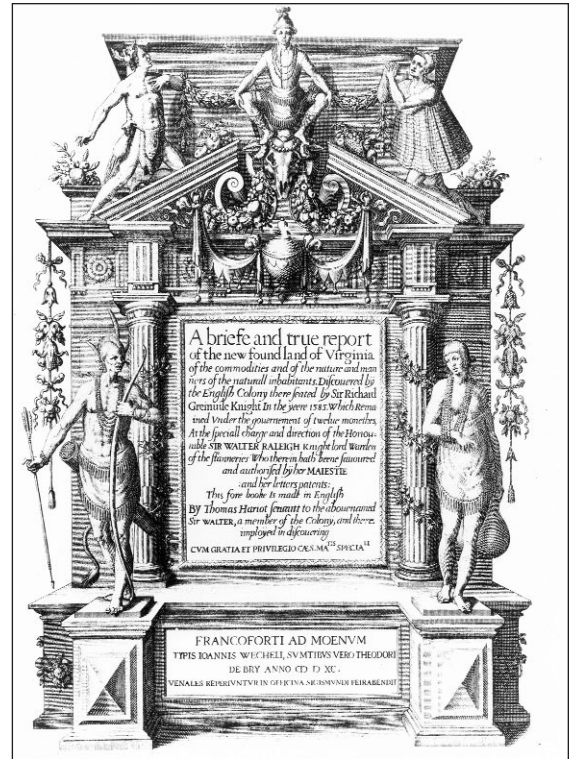
National Humanities Institute

<<http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/va-ord.htm>>

Proceedings of the Virginia Assembly, 1619

Virtual Jamestown / Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and the Virginia Center for Digital History at the University of Virginia

<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/jamestown-browse?id=J1036>>



From the title page of *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia...* by Thomas Hariot, 1871 reprint. Library of Virginia, Special Collections.

Ordinances for Virginia, 24 July–3 August 1621

Believed to be an almost exact transcription of the 1619 document which gave instructions to Governor Yeardley to convene a Council of State and a General Assembly in Virginia in 1619.

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/va04.htm>>

Governor William Berkeley on Bacon's Rebellion, 19 May 1676

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1651-1700/bacon_rebel/berke.htm>

Bacon's Declaration in the Name of the People, 30 July 1676

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1651-1700/bacon_rebel/bacon.htm>

Treaty Between Virginia and the Indians, 1677

Bay Link

<<http://www.baylink.org/treaty/Default.html>>

Charter of the College of William and Mary by King William III and Queen Mary II, 1693

College of William and Mary. Earl Gregg Swem Library. Special Collections

<<http://www.swem.wm.edu/spcoll/exhibits/exhibits/charter/charter/>>

Selected Virginia Statutes Relating to Slavery (seventeenth & eighteenth centuries)

Virtual Jamestown / Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and the Virginia Center for Digital History at the University of Virginia

<<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/slavelink.html>>

Selected Virginia Statutes Relating to Indentured Servants

Virtual Jamestown / Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and the Virginia Center for Digital History at the University of Virginia

<<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/indlink.html>>

Selected Virginia Statutes Relating to Religion

Virtual Jamestown / Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and the Virginia Center for Digital History at the University of Virginia

Part 1: <<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/lawlink.html>>

Part 2: <<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/lawlink2.html>>

18TH CENTURY DOCUMENTS

Thomas Jefferson on Slavery

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/tj3/writings/slavery.htm>>

Virginia Stamp Act Resolutions, 30 May 1765

Colonial Williamsburg

<<http://www.history.org/History/teaching/tchcrvar.cfm>>

Early Virginia Religious Petitions, 1774–1802

Library of Congress/Library of Virginia

<<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/repehtml/repehome.html>>

Preamble and Resolution of the Virginia Convention, 15 May 1776

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/const/const02.htm>>

Draft Constitution for Virginia, June 1776

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/jeffcons.htm>>

Virginia Declaration of Rights, 12 June 1776

Library of Virginia

<<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/k12/bor/varights.htm>>

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/virginia.htm>>

Jefferson's Preamble to the Virginia Constitution, 29 June 1776

Declaration Foundation

<<http://www.declaration.net/docs/jefferson-preamble-virginia-constitution-1776.asp>>

The Constitution of Virginia, 29 June 1776

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://elsinore.cis.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/va05.htm>>

Draft for a Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, 1779 by Thomas Jefferson

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/tj3/writings/draft1779.htm>>

The Virginia Cession, 1 March 1784

On January 2, 1781, Virginia offered to cede its northwestern lands but attached conditions unacceptable to Congress. On December 20, 1783, the Virginia legislature modified its position and passed the Virginia Act of Cession. The other states with western claims subsequently relinquished them, easing the way towards ratification of the Articles of Confederation.

Indiana Historical Bureau

<<http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/resources/docvaccess.html>>

Memorial and Remonstrance 20 June 1785, by James Madison

Written in opposition to a bill introduced in the General Assembly of Virginia to levy a general assessment for the support of teachers of religions, Madison's Memorial presented a powerful argument against state supported religion. It was written just a few months before the General Assembly passed Jefferson's religious freedom bill.

James Madison Center, James Madison University

<http://www.jmu.edu/madison/center/main_pages/madison_archives/const_confed/rights/antecedents/memorial.htm>

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, 16 January 1786

The Library of Virginia

<<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/k12/bor/vsrftext.htm>>

World Policy Institute

<<http://www.worldpolicy.org/globalrights/religion/va-religiousfreedom.html>>

Resolution of the General Assembly of Virginia, 21 January 1786

A resolution proposing a joint meeting of commissioners from the states to consider and recommend a federal plan for regulating commerce

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/const/const03.htm>>

Variant texts of the Virginia Plan, presented by Edmund Randolph to the Federal Convention, 29 May 1787

Text A. The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/const/vatexta.htm>>

Text B. The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/const/vatextb.htm>>

Text C. The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/const/vatextc.htm>>

The Northwest Ordinance, 13 July 1787

An ordinance for the government of the Territory of the United States northwest of the River Ohio

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/nworder.htm>>

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1776-1800/ohio/norwes.htm>>

Ratification of the Constitution by the State of Virginia, 26 June 1788

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/const/ratva.htm>>

Virginia Resolution, 1798

A resolution against the Alien and Sedition Acts

The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/virres.htm>>

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing

<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1776-1800/constitution/virg1798.htm>>

19TH CENTURY DOCUMENTS

Gabriel's Conspiracy: Transcripts, 1800

Library of Virginia

<<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whowere/exhibits/deathliberty/gabriel/index.htm>>

The Confessions of Nat Turner, 1831

University of Groningen / Dept. of Humanities Computing
<<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1826-1850/slavery/confes01.htm>>
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
<<http://docsouth.unc.edu/turner/menu.html>>

Nat Turner's Rebellion, 1831

Library of Virginia
<<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whoware/exhibits/deathliberty/natturner/index.htm>>

John Brown's Raid, 1859

Library of Virginia
<<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whoware/exhibits/deathliberty/johnbrown/index.htm>>

John Brown's Address to the Court, 1859

PBS
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2943t.html>>

[Virginia] Ordinance of Secession, 17 April 1861

West Virginia Division of Culture and History
<<http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/ordinanceofsecession.html>>

Declaration of the People of Virginia Represented in Convention at Wheeling, 13 June 1861

This document called for the reorganization of the government of Virginia on the grounds that due to Virginia's decision to secede from the United States, all state government offices had been vacated. This initiated the division of Virginia and West Virginia into separate states.

West Virginia Division of Culture and History
<<http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/declaration.html>>

The Southern Homefront 1861–1865: Topical Access to State Official Documents

Full text of selected state documents for the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Virginia documents include: *Acts of the General Assembly* (1862–1864), *Journal of the House of Delegates* (1861–1863), & *Message from the Executive [sic] of the Commonwealth: with Accompanying Documents, Showing the Military and Naval Preparations for the Defence of the State of Virginia, &c. &c.* (1861)

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
<<http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/states.html>>

20TH CENTURY DOCUMENTS

Primary Source Documents for Educational Use

Eighteenth to twentieth-century documents which are primarily excerpts designed for ease of use in the classroom, rather than full transcriptions

Library of Virginia
<<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/k12/psd/index.htm>>

1902 Constitution of Virginia

This was the fifth constitution of the Commonwealth. It established a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting, effectively disenfranchising black voters. Excerpts from Article II regarding voter qualifications and election procedures

University of Virginia.
<<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/afam/politics/legislation.html#amendment>>

The Constitution of Virginia Effective July 1, 1971 with Amendments January 1, 2005

The 1971 edition of the Virginia Constitution is the one currently in effect. It was revised and agreed to by the General Assembly in the 1969 and again in the 1970 sessions. It was ratified by the people on November 3, 1970, and went into effect at noon on the first day of July 1971.

Virginia. General Assembly. <<http://legis.state.va.us/laws/search/constofva.pdf>>

Virginia. General Assembly. <<http://legis.state.va.us/laws/constitution.htm>> (can be searched by keyword or phrase)

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